

News Advisory



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Safety Warning

High Surf, Dangerous Conditions Expected along Coast

A powerful storm system located over the Gulf of Alaska will generate a large northwesterly swell into the California Coastal waters beginning today, Friday April 8 and continue through the weekend, State Park officials said today.

The National Marine Weather Service has released a high surf advisory statement for significant wave heights of 11 to 13 feet that will continue to build to as high as 15 to 18 feet tonight before slowly tapering off late Saturday and Sunday. It is forecasted that that strong winds will accompany this rough surf. The National Weather service is issuing gale warnings for most of the coastal waters.

Very dangerous surf conditions are to be expected along the north and west facing beaches in Northern and Central California coastal areas. Higher than normal surf is forecasted on west facing beaches in the Ventura, Malibu, and Manhattan Beach areas.

In the interest of public safety, swimming, wading, and water sports should be avoided. Certain state park areas Northern and Central California may need to be closed due to the high surf. With the opening of both the recreation salmon fishing and abalone season on April 1, 2005, boaters and divers should also take note of these dangerous conditions. Popular surfing areas in our state parks may see extreme conditions.

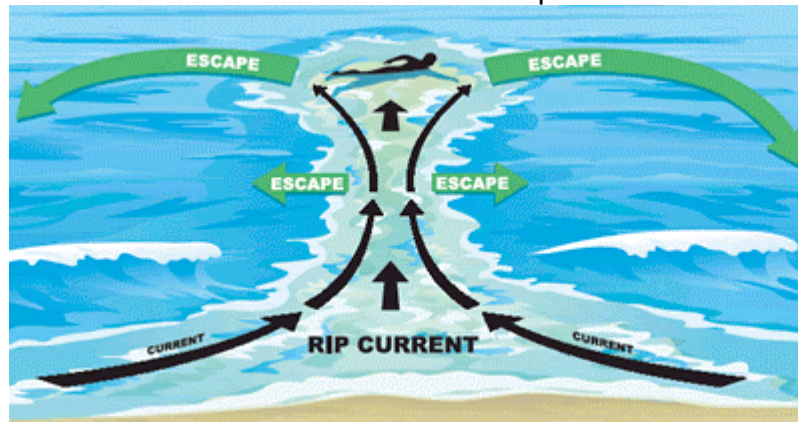
Visitors are cautioned to avoid exposed beach and rock areas close to the surf line. These areas can seem safe from most breaking waves, but the pattern of breaking waves produces a periodic sequence of large, very strong surges that can wash inland great distances and take visitors by surprise. Watch from a distance, not up close!

"Be preventative, and be safe out there," said Alex Peabody, California State Parks' Aquatic Specialist. Please check your local state park office, NOAA weather radio, or your favorite media outlet for updated information.

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The following information is provided courtesy of the United States Lifesaving Association, in partnership with NOAA's National Weather Service

How to Avoid and Survive Rip Currents



Learn how to swim!

- Never swim alone.
- Be cautious at all times, especially when swimming at unguarded beaches. If in doubt, don't go out!
- Whenever possible, swim at a lifeguard protected beach.
- Obey all instructions and orders from lifeguards.
- If caught in a rip current, remain calm to conserve energy and think clearly.
- Don't fight the current. Swim out of the current in a direction following the shoreline. When out of the current, swim towards shore.
- If you are unable to swim out of the rip current, float or calmly tread water. When out of the current, swim towards shore.
- If you are still unable to reach shore, draw attention to yourself: face the shore, wave your arms, and yell for help.
- If you see someone in trouble, get help from a lifeguard. If a lifeguard is not available, have someone call 9-1-1. Throw the rip current victim something that floats and yell instructions on how to escape. **Remember, many people drown while trying to save someone else from a rip current.**

For more information on rip currents go to: www.usla.org/ripcurrents

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